

Annual Report

2016
2017



RALEIGH

Parks,
Recreation and
Cultural Resources
parks.raleighnc.gov



Letter

from the Director



It is a great pleasure to present the 2016-2017 Annual Report of the Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

Planning and implementation continue to move forward on capital and bond projects. Please visit our website at raleighnc.gov/parks and search “current projects” to follow the progress.

- The City achieved another critical milestone this year with the selection of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) to lead the master planning process for **Dorothea Dix Park**. Over the next two years, MVVA, in partnership with the City and the Dix Park Conservancy, will lead an inclusive, inspiring and engaging process to develop the master plan for Dorothea Dix Park. The master plan will outline a bold vision for the future of Dix Park and a roadmap to achieve that vision.
- Following the opening of **Raleigh's first dog run at Jaycee Park** in February, the city celebrated winning a dog park makeover from Beneful, which will transform **Millbrook Dog Park**. Looking forward, there are plans to add a dog park to the Buffalo Road Athletic Park, with completion estimated in fall 2017.
- **Sassafras Playground** officially opened in November, providing a safe play space for children of all abilities. This project was a multi-year collaboration the City of Raleigh, Frankie Lemmon Foundation, The Kiwanis Club of Raleigh, community partners, local businesses, and volunteers.
- In January, the ribbon was cut on the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Gardens**. The additional amenities are intended to make the park more user and family-friendly; better meeting the needs of the visiting public, including school children, college students and elderly citizens.
- The **Volunteer program grew again**, with almost 15,000 people assisting with park maintenance and beautification, coaching athletic teams, helping at special events and keeping our greenway trails and parks clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail and Adopt-A-Park programs.
- **Several awards were won** across different areas of the department, including the Stewardship Concept Award for the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan, the Community Enhancement Award for Sassafras Playground, and the Digital Inclusion Leadership Award for the Digital Connectors Program. For the first time, department staff also won the G. Herbert Stout Award in recognition of exemplary and innovative use of GIS technology.

We will continue to work hard to provide a model parks system for citizens of Raleigh to be proud of and enjoy. We are committed to maintaining our parks and facilities in a clean and safe manner, to preserving and protecting our natural environment and providing the highest quality recreation opportunities for citizens of every age and ability.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank City Council and the citizens of Raleigh whose continued and unwavering support make these accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

Diane B. Sauer, Director

Together we connect and enrich our community through exceptional experiences.



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Park Projects

The bond approved by voters in fall 2014 included \$6 million for improvements at the Pullen Arts Center and surrounding north side of Pullen Park. The current structure at 105 Pullen Road was built in the 1960's and houses a variety of programs including: pottery, painting, jewelry, printmaking, glass, arts-based summer camps for children with support spaces for administration, meetings, gallery, and operation. Improvements are needed to accommodate the growth and popularity of arts education at Pullen Arts Center with new technology and equipment. No decision has been made on whether the existing building will be renovated, expanded or replaced entirely. A master plan for Pullen Park, completed in 2002, will guide the project.

The Pullen Arts Center, part of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, will be closing for expansion and full renovation on November 9, 2017. Construction is anticipated to take a minimum of 12 months. During this closure, Pullen Arts Center will increase its square footage by 50%, to help meet the increasing demand for classes and studio space for pottery, painting, jewelry, glass, and printmaking, as well as larger gallery spaces to exhibit area artists.

The Office of Raleigh Arts supports and promotes the arts in Raleigh by administering the programs of the City of Raleigh Arts Commission and the City's Public Art and Design Board and supporting the Pullen and Sertoma arts centers. The Office of Raleigh Arts is part of the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

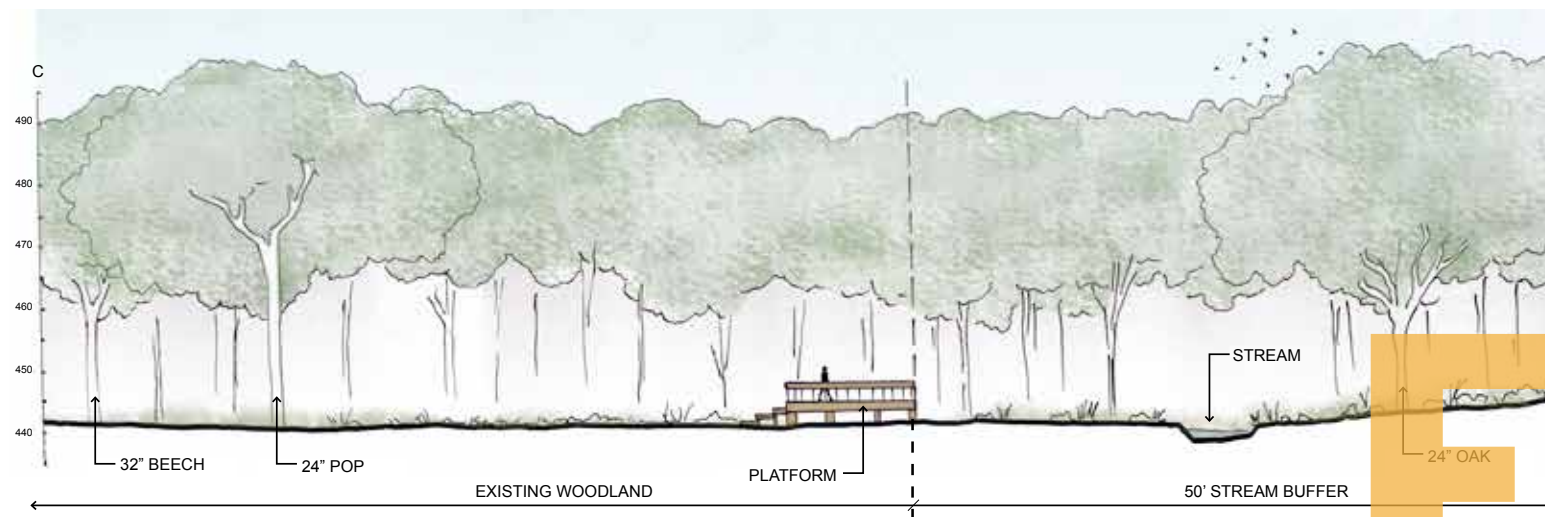
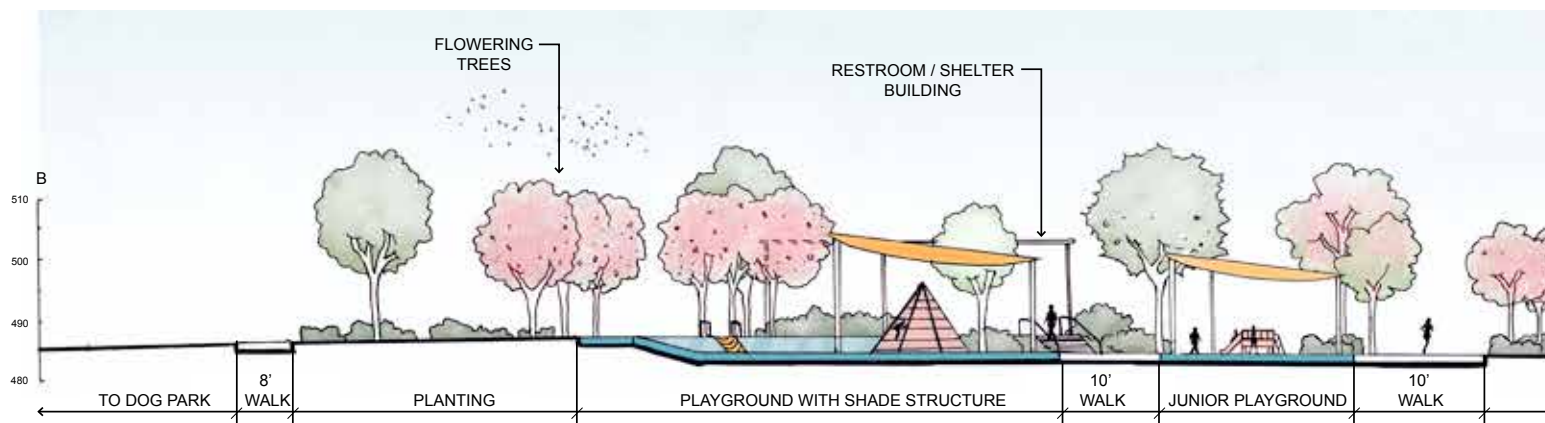
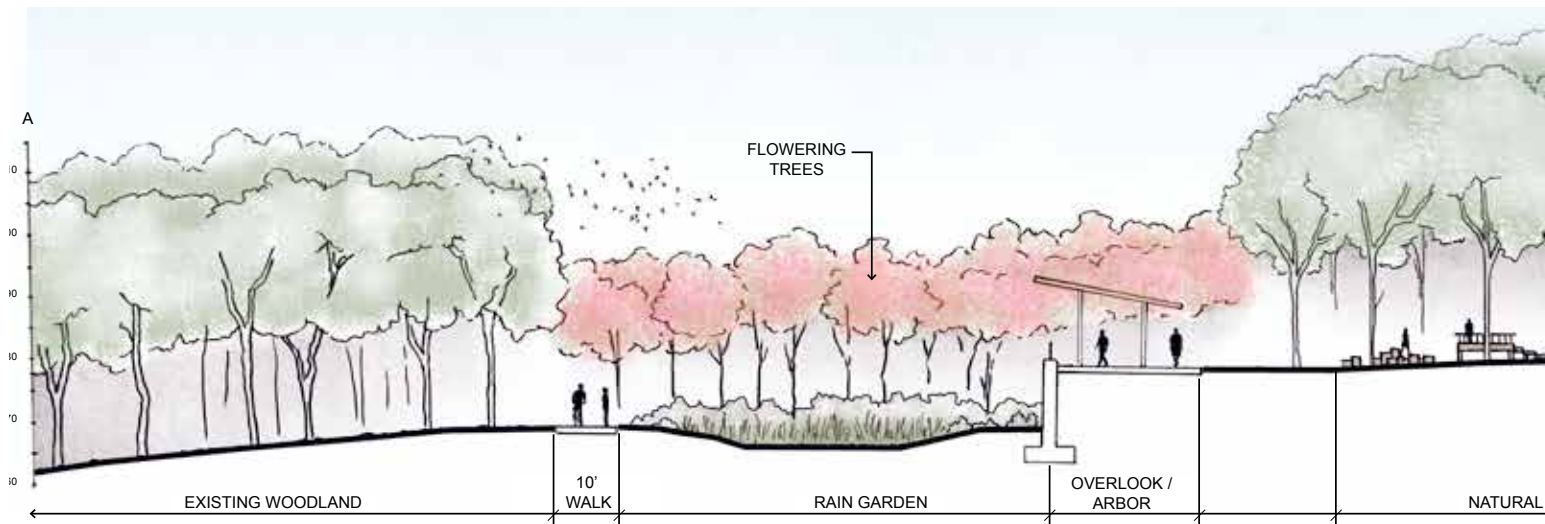


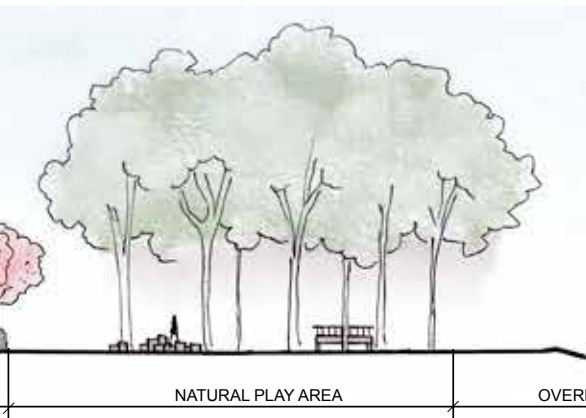
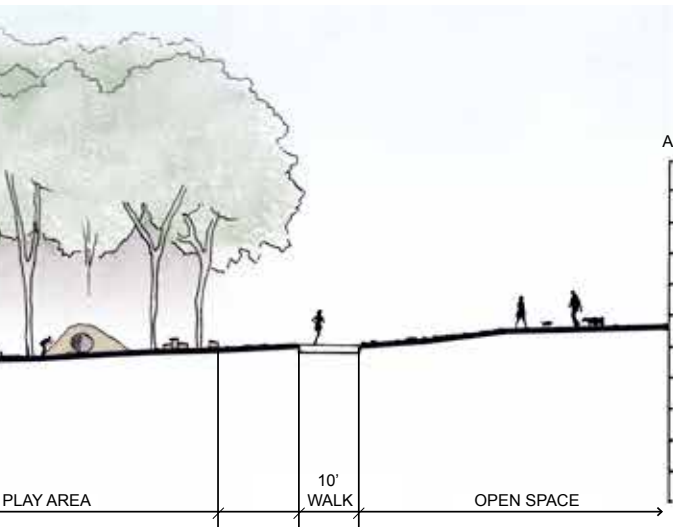


Pullen

Arts Plan

Park Projects (cont.)





Erinsbrook Park is located at 11921 Leesville Road in northwest Raleigh. This nearly 13.3 acre vacant property was acquired by the City in 2003 in anticipation of developing a neighborhood park. In May 2016, the City of Raleigh and obs landscape architects began an interactive public process to complete a master plan for the park property. Through a series of public workshops and Citizen Planning Committee meetings, a plan was developed to guide future development. On May 2, 2017, the master plan was adopted by City Council.

Erinsbrook



Jaycee

The new dog run at Jaycee Park opened on the afternoon of February 25, and is located at 2401 Wade Avenue.

The Dog Run is located just south of the parking area on Wade Avenue close to the playground and tennis courts. There is an accessible sidewalk connecting the dog run from the parking lot on Wade Avenue. Ample parking is provided on both sides of the dog run. The dog run includes benches, trash cans, and dog waste station. A dog water fountain will be provided nearby as part of the upcoming Comfort Station project.

Beneful

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department hosted a Beneful Dream Dog Park Project kick off at Millbrook Exchange Dog Park on April 27, 2017. The popular North Raleigh dog park will receive a \$30,000 donation for park improvements after the community rallied and garnered the most qualified votes during the #BenefulDogPark promotion on Walmart.com/Beneful. Millbrook is one of seven dog parks around the country that participated in the promotion, and ultimately secured the most qualified votes.

Buffaloe Road Athletic Park

On June 21, 2016, the Raleigh City Council unanimously approved the proposals and schematic designs for the Buffaloe Road Dog Park, located at 5900 Buffaloe Road, Raleigh NC 27604. The development of these new facilities is consistent with the community's expressed need for more dog parks in the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources System Plan. Implementation of the dog park will begin in summer 2017 and is expected to be completed by fall 2017.



Dog Parks



Dix Park

Update

The City's acquisition of the 308-acre Dorothea Dix campus in July of 2015 was the first step in what promises to be an exciting process to create America's next great public park. The City achieved another critical milestone this year with the selection of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), a Brooklyn-based landscape architecture firm, to lead the master planning process for Dorothea Dix Park.

For more than 30 years, MVVA has created landscapes around the world that welcome, engage, and inspire people. Recent projects, including Brooklyn Bridge Park and Chicago's Maggie Daley Park, have been recognized not only for the quality of experience they provide but for positively transforming communities. Mr. Van Valkenburgh's work has shaped some of the most important cultural and academic institutions in America, including Princeton University, Harvard University, CityArchRiver (the St. Louis Arch Grounds), the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, and beginning this year, the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago. A recent article in Art in America magazine stated, "Mr. Van Valkenburgh may be the Frederick Law Olmstead the 21st Century needs."

Over the next two years, MVVA, in partnership with the City, will lead an inclusive, inspiring and engaging process to develop the master plan for Dorothea Dix Park. The master plan will outline a bold vision for the future of Dix Park and a roadmap to achieve that vision. There will be multiple opportunities during the planning process for the community to come together to dream and discuss the future of Dix Park.

In addition, the City will continue to host a variety of public programs, activities, tours and other events to continue to bring visitors to the park. This spring the City hosted its first Movie by Moonlight, which drew over 800 people from around the region. In addition, the wildly successful Spring Fling, brought adults of all ages together in an egg hunt on Harvey Hill at Dix Park. Visitors can look forward to a variety of upcoming events including a summer concert series, fitness classes, art programs and much more! Events and news of the park can be followed on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, #DixPark. In addition, the City will launch a Dix Park website this summer.

The City is grateful to be supported by the leadership, stewardship and generosity of the city's non-profit partner, the Dix Park Conservancy. The Conservancy has pledged to pay for the master plan and all of the activities that support the planning process. Together, the City in partnership with the Conservancy and greater Raleigh community have an unprecedented opportunity to create an amazing new public space for Raleigh's current and future generations.



Dedications

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department opened the Thomas G. Crowder Woodland Center on Saturday, October 15. After the ceremony, there were demonstrations highlighting upcoming programs. The new center is located at 5611 Jaguar Park Drive, Raleigh, 27606. The Thomas G. Crowder Woodland Center features include multipurpose spaces for education and community functions, interpretive displays on nature and health as well as a deck for outside programming. The council approved naming the Woodland Center in honor of former Councilor Thomas G. Crowder who died from cancer in 2014. Thomas G. Crowder was a lifetime Raleigh resident and served on the City council for 11 years. He was elected to council in 2003, after two terms on the city's planning commission.





Thomas Crowder Woodland Center

October 15, 2016

Dedications (cont.)



Sassafraes Playground



A dedication ceremony to celebrate the opening of Sassafras All Children's Playground was held November 5, 2016. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, children explored the playground, danced and sang along to the Sandbox band, and created an art project. The playground is located in Laurel Hills Park, 3808 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh.

Sassafras All Children's playground is located in Laurel Hills Park, 3808 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh. Children of all abilities enjoy the playground which offers a variety of inclusive play experiences. The 3.5 acre site includes traditional play equipment like swings and slides and a basketball court with adjustable hoop height, but also incorporates many other unique features including accessible elevated decking and a pair of 50-foot-long zip lines. This one-of-a-kind playground provides children of all abilities the chance to swing and slide and giggle and glide.

Sassafras All Children's Playground is a public-private venture involving the City of Raleigh, Frankie Lemmon Foundation, The Kiwanis Club of Raleigh, community partners, local businesses, and volunteers. Funding for this \$2.3million playground project is comprised of funds from Parks Bond, private donation, City labor and in-kind donation as well as numerous volunteer efforts.

Dedications (cont.)

The newly renovated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Gardens was dedicated on Saturday, January 14, 2017. The park is located at 900 Rock Quarry Road, Raleigh, NC 27610 at the corner of MLK Jr Boulevard and Rock Quarry Road.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Gardens were originally constructed in 1990 through the efforts of a number of park advocates including the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee. In 2003, the City acquired 1.67 acres of vacant land adjacent to the park for the purpose of expanding the existing Memorial Gardens. The additional amenities are intended to make the park more user and family-friendly and better meeting the needs of the visiting public, including school children, college students and elderly citizens.





MLK

Memorial Gardens

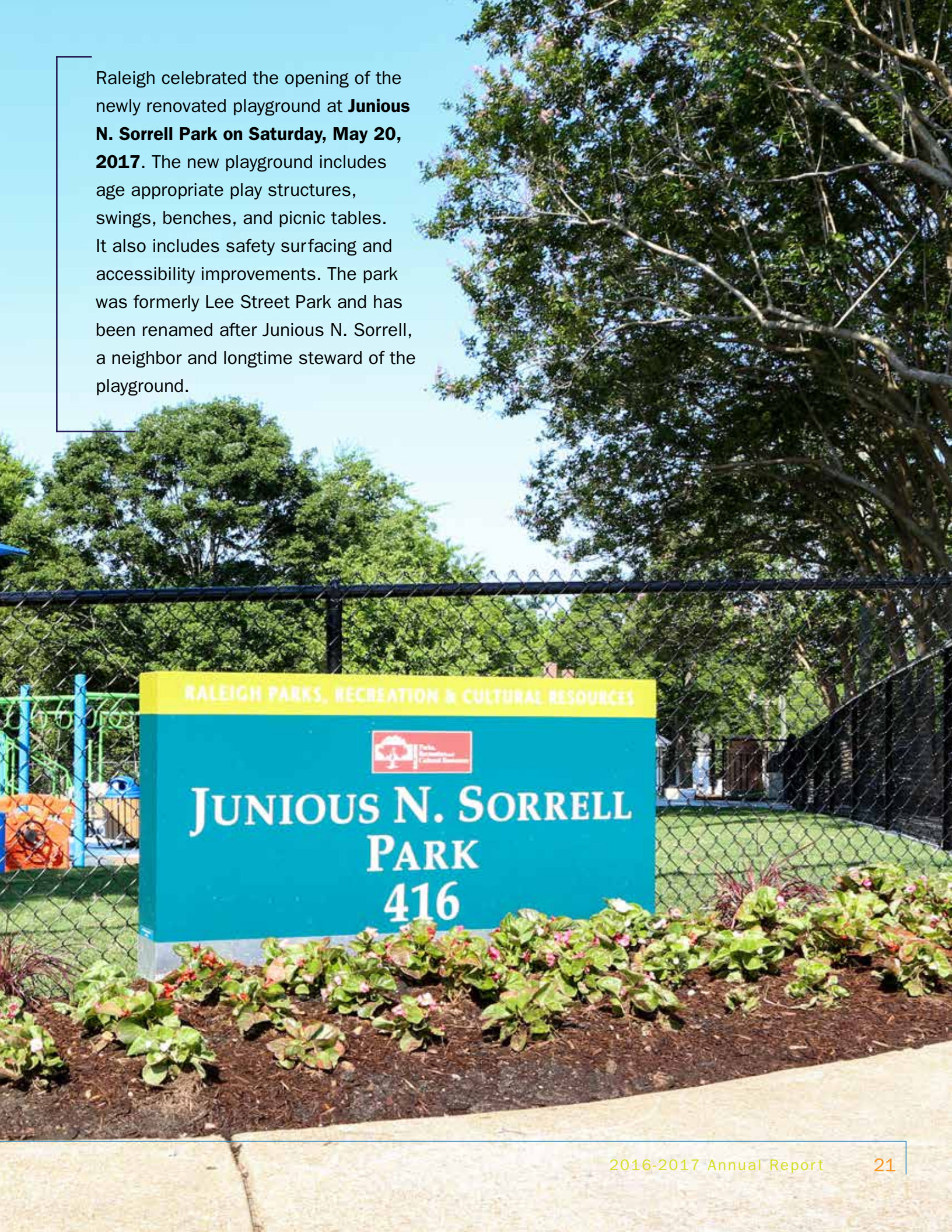
January 14, 2017

Dedications

(cont.)



Raleigh celebrated the opening of the newly renovated playground at **Junious N. Sorrell Park on Saturday, May 20, 2017**. The new playground includes age appropriate play structures, swings, benches, and picnic tables. It also includes safety surfacing and accessibility improvements. The park was formerly Lee Street Park and has been renamed after Junious N. Sorrell, a neighbor and longtime steward of the playground.



Volunteer





Contributions

Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are contributing their time, talent and resources to make a difference in our community. Parks and cultural offerings across our City are made stronger by the spirited involvement of individuals, corporate groups, schools and community organizations.

Volunteers assist with park maintenance and beautification, coach athletic teams, help out at special events and keep our greenway trails and parks clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail and Adopt-A-Park programs.

Over the past year, nearly 15,000 volunteers gave more than 125,000 hours of service within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. These volunteer hours amount to a value of \$2.8M.

Summer camp and outdoor nature play improve kids' physical and mental health as they build confidence and develop social skills. Our department has aligned with the City of Oaks Foundation to provide need-based scholarships that allow kids to attend camp free or little cost.

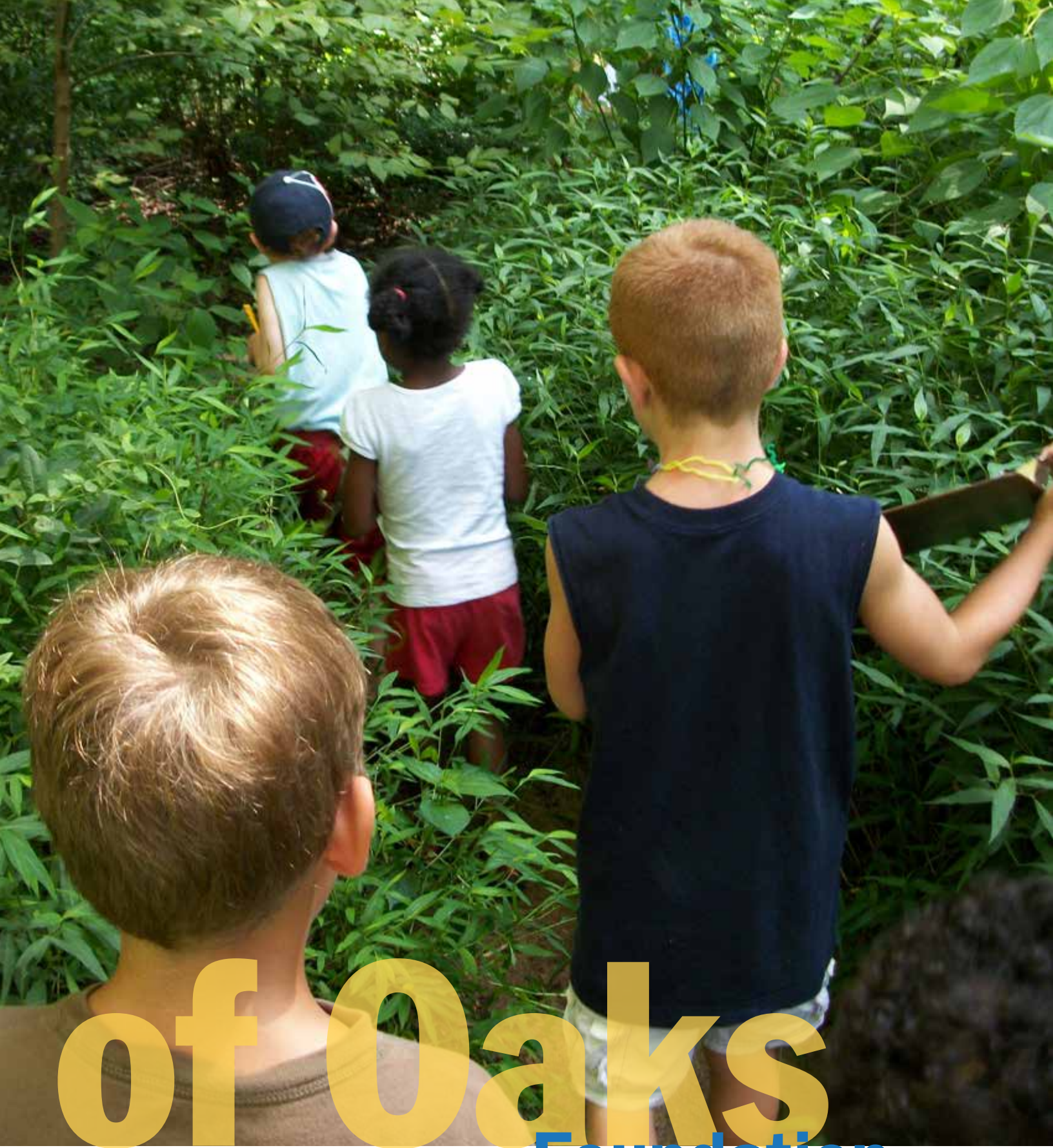
The nonprofit foundation provided over **\$20,000 in financial aid** for youth aged 6-13 to participate in Raleigh's outdoor camps and nature programs in 2017. This will make camp possible for almost 60 kids.

The foundation also is active in conservation, so that everyone can experience our parks, greenways, nature preserves, farms and community gardens. The organization:

- Acquired nine acres of beautiful forests, streams and sloped hills in west Raleigh that will serve as a vital link in the Capital Area Greenway system.
- Hosted three Open Garden Days in the beautiful Joslin Garden, as well as an Easter Egg Hunt and Scavenger Hunt in the garden and a special Mother-Daughter Tea at the Joslin House on Mother's Day.
- Partnered with Sustainable Raleigh as a co-sponsor of the 10th annual Raleigh Environmental Awards program to recognize outstanding environmental stewardship in our community, and to award eleven mini-grants for innovative urban agriculture, pollinator, and community garden projects in Raleigh. Also partnered with Sustainable Raleigh to host Raleigh Urban Agriculture Day at the Mordecai Historic Park.



City



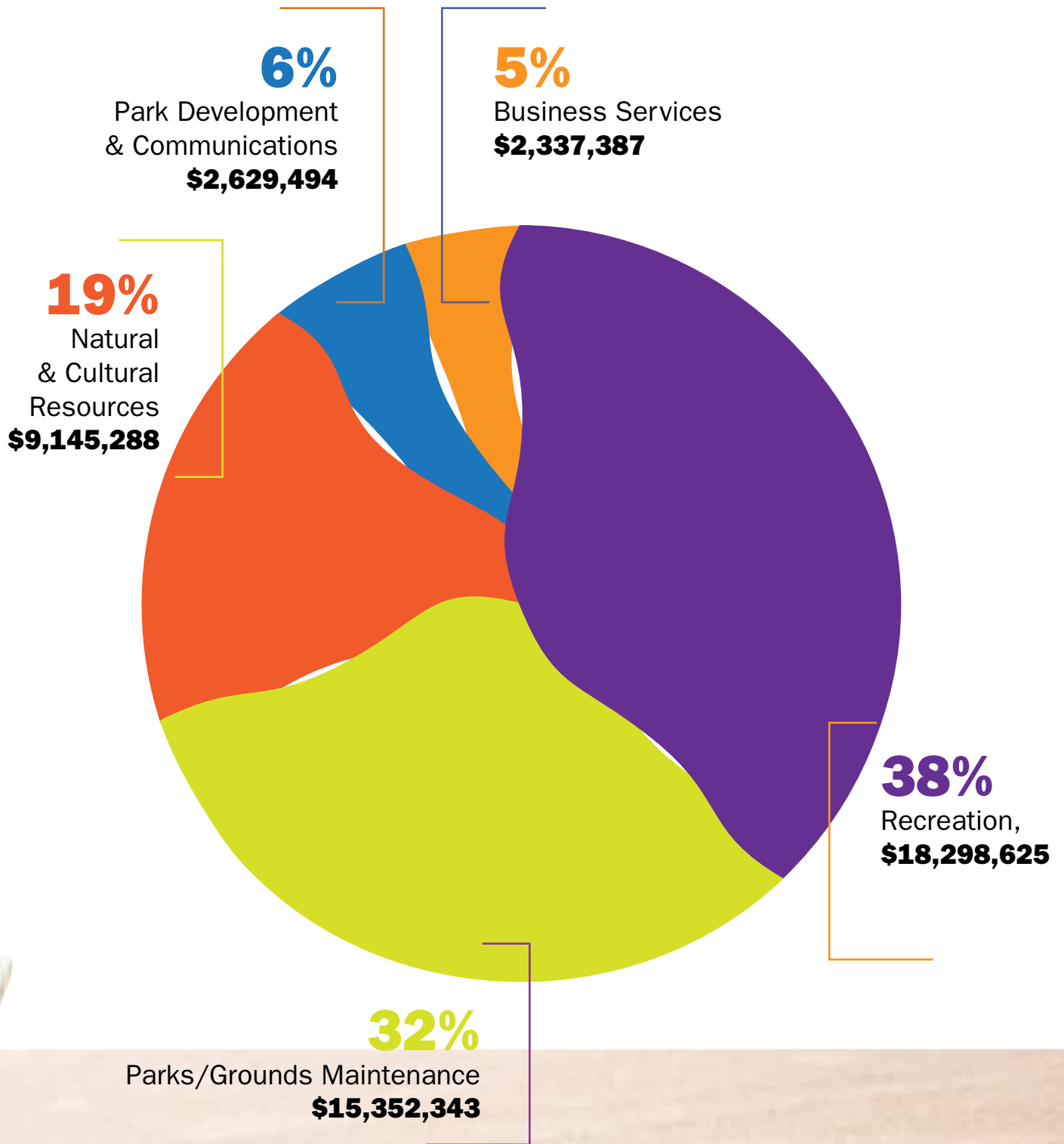
of Oaks Foundation

By the Numbers

The PRCR Department's 2016-2017 operating budget is **\$47.7M**.

The Department's Capital Improvement Budget for FY17 is \$24M and includes \$19M for 2014 bond projects.





Awards





Sassafra All Children's Playground project was selected as a 2017 **winner of the Community Enhancement Award** at the 19th Annual TCREW Champion Awards. Nominees and winners were recognized by a record crowd of more than 600 business and real estate leaders in the Triangle at the annual awards luncheon at Embassy Suites in Cary, N.C. on April 25, 2017. The event was presented in partnership with sponsors Colliers International, Glover Corporation, McDonald York Building Company, Town of Chapel Hill, Triangle Business Journal and Wells Fargo.

The TCREW Champion Awards recognizes companies, individuals and projects in the Triangle's real estate community who have characterized excellence, innovation and leadership in 11 categories. Since 1998, the TCREW Champion Awards has honored excellence in the Triangle's Real Estate community, representing the most innovative and accomplished projects and leaders in the real estate community.

Awards (cont.)

At the Broadband Communities Summit event in Dallas, TX, **Raleigh Digital Connectors was selected as one of six winners of the 2017 Digital Inclusion Leadership Awards**, presented by Next Century Cities and Google Fiber. Raleigh Digital Connectors was selected as the winner in the Leader in Digital Inclusion Best Practices category.

These awards celebrate city governments who are leading programs or empowering community-based organizations to tackle barriers to internet adoption, while also encouraging leaders in the public sector to get involved in digital inclusion by sharing best practices.

Raleigh Digital Connectors teaches valuable technological skills to youth in the community who then teach their family members and other members of the community. The program is a vehicle for increasing broadband adoption and life skill development which will be accomplished through a multi-generational approach with the ultimate goal of stimulating economic growth. Through access, education, awareness, and information the Raleigh Digital Connectors are building a culture that values and embraces technology to enhance lives.

Around 15 percent of US households—or approximately 50 million Americans—don't have internet in their homes. Families affected by the digital divide, many of whom are from lower income neighborhoods, are at a disadvantage when it comes to doing homework, applying for jobs, or staying in touch with loved ones.

“Ensuring that all residents are able to benefit from the wide range of available online resources is a high priority for each of our Digital Inclusion Leadership Awardees,” said Deb Socia, Executive Director of Next Century Cities. “Though each winner has a unique approach, they all demonstrate that dedicated local elected officials and strong community partnerships are key components of a successful project.”

Next Century Cities and Google Fiber believe that city leaders have a major role to play in getting residents the resources and digital access they need. This awards program celebrates those local leaders who are tackling barriers to internet adoption through direct programming or in partnership with community based organizations.



Digital Connectors

G. Herbert Stout Award

The **City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department** was **recognized with the G. Herbert Stout Award at the 2017 NC GIS Conference**. This award, named in honor of a former Wake County Commissioner and early visionary of GIS, is presented to one local government in North Carolina each year in recognition of exemplary and innovative use of GIS technology. This is the first time that the City of Raleigh has received the award.

GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technology allows users to capture, analyze, and interpret geospatial data. GIS has become an essential tool for modern mapmaking, and is used by planners and designers to tackle some of the toughest social, environmental, and economic problems facing our cities today.

The award-winning project submitted by the City of Raleigh is known as the Experienced-Based Park Access model (EBPA). This model, based on cutting-edge techniques in the fields of geography and planning, is used to evaluate citizen access to parks and open space throughout the city. The purpose of the project is to advance a core long-term goal of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department: to develop a geographically equitable park system that provides every citizen with access to a park or greenway trail within a 1-mile walk of their home.

The staff team recognized in receipt of the award includes Andrew Hayes, TJ McCourt, Cassie Schumacher-Georgopoulos, and Rob Siwiec.

Stewardship Concept Award

Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan received the Stewardship Concept Award during the seventh annual awards ceremony for the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program (GTSDA) on May 4, 2017 at the JC Raulston Arboretum. These awards recognize development projects in the triangle that go above and beyond state and local requirements to incorporate innovative environmental protections and provide a model for green development practices in the Triangle.



This City of Raleigh Park Master Plan was completed by Site Collaborative, Inc. with Ward Consulting Engineers and the City of Raleigh. The master plan process for this 21 acre park began in September 2014 and was approved by City Council in January 2016. The plan provides spaces for enjoying nature, passive recreation, education, and preservation. A future connection to the Capital Area Greenway is featured as is a natural-themed play area; access to an overlook for an historic dam on the property; and a stream restoration/constructed wetland with boardwalk that is in partnership with the City's Stormwater Management Division. Judges particularly appreciated the extensive natural resources and habitat analysis that was

performed for the site, efforts to obtain meaningful community involvement and engagement, the willingness to improve the condition of Hare Snipe Creek that is on the site, and to feature the various successional (ecological) states that exist on-site as an educational focus.

Employee of the Year

Each year, departments across the City nominate outstanding employees as Employee of the Year. These nominations from co-workers are sent to the Human Resources department and one employee from each department is featured as the department's Employee of the Year.

This year, **Randolph Johnson, Special Events Crew Supervisor was nominated by several co-workers for this special recognition.**

Accolades & Kudos: Anyone who's worked with Randolph has likely heard him say these words: "I have you covered" and "no problem." No matter the request or last-minute-changes that come his way, Randolph adjusts with ease and is willing to go the extra mile each time. He truly exhibits joy in daily work, setting a professional and positive tone for his team.

The **Your Parks. Your Stories.** social media campaign engaged our community in a meaningful way by showcasing personal stories that highlight the benefits of parks and recreation.

The video series, photo, and essay contests allowed us to share personal stories and inspire others to create their own story with Raleigh Parks.

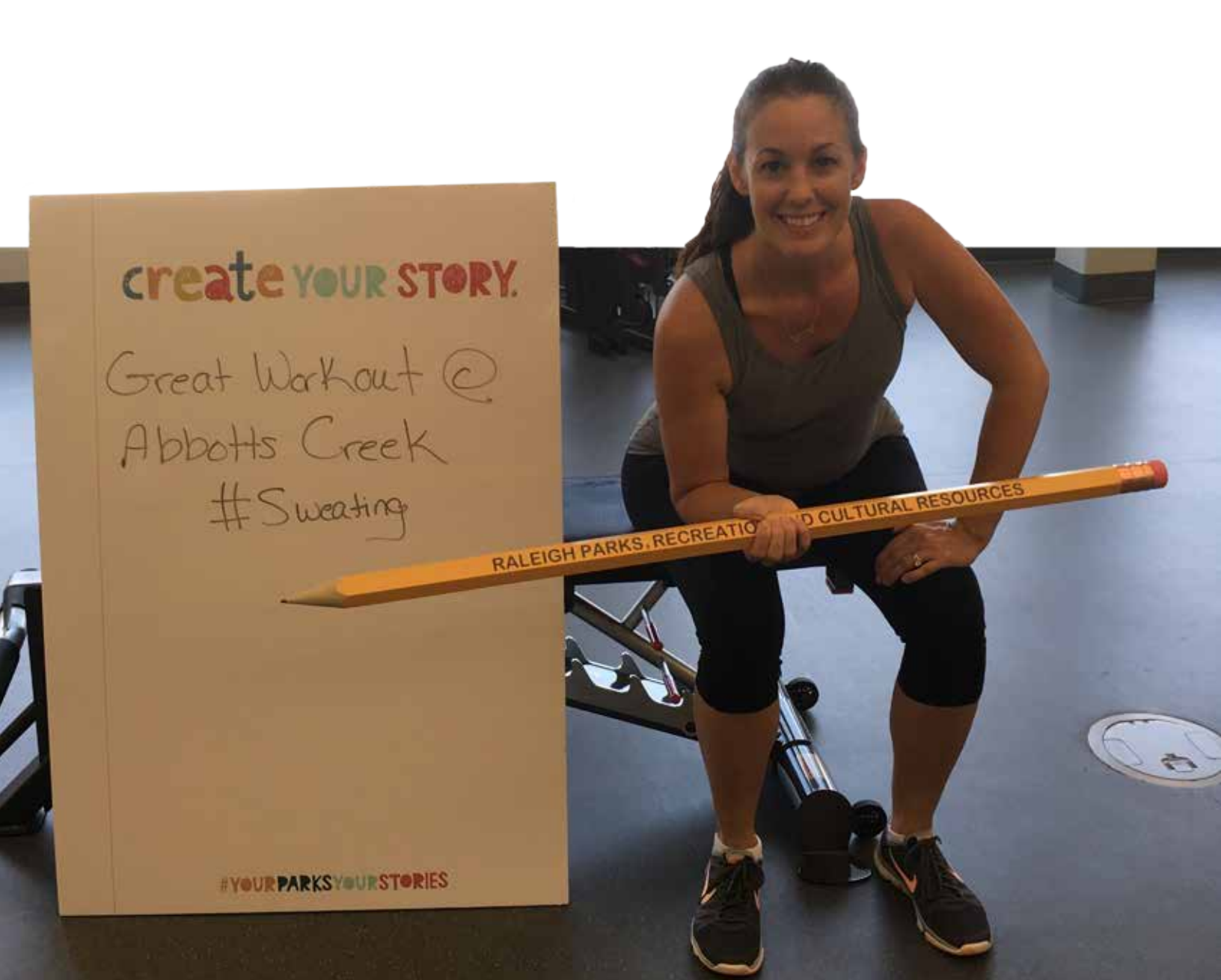
Overall Social Engagement: **191,517**

Facebook **127,634**

Twitter **63,412**

Instagram **471**





Our Parks. Your Stories.



Keeping In Touch



Satisfaction Surveys

Raleigh residents who participate in online surveys help us learn whether we are meeting their needs. Their evaluations let us know whether we are providing the exceptional experiences they expect. Over the past year, we received about 6,050 completed surveys from program participants. Overall, their satisfaction rating was 4.5 out of 5.0.

Get Social with Raleigh Parks

The department embraces social media to keep members of the community engaged and to help us stay informed about what matters to them. We look at social media as a customer service tool, allowing us to interact with citizens, receive feedback and share information.

Our online social media community has grown to 53,378 members.

Twitter: 13,568 followers

Facebook: 5,354 page likes

Pinterest: 1,682 followers

YouTube: 32,429 lifetime views

Instagram: 345 followers

Join the conversation

Have a question about the parks? **Ask us.**

Have a shoutout about something fun in the parks? **Tell us.**

 **[Facebook.com/raleighparks](https://www.facebook.com/raleighparks)**

 **[Twitter.com/raleighparks](https://twitter.com/raleighparks)**

 **[Instagram.com/raleighparks](https://www.instagram.com/raleighparks)**

 **[Pinterest.com/raleighparks](https://www.pinterest.com/raleighparks)**

Raleigh City Council

Mayor: Nancy McFarlane

Mary-Ann Baldwin

Corey Branch

David Cox

Kay Crowder

Bonner Gaylord

Russ Stephenson

Dickie Thompson

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Patrick Buffkin

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Dexter Hebert

Jennifer Hoverstad

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Dr. Carol Love

Clodagh Lyons-Bastian

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Pam Hartley

Linda Dallas

R. Gene Davis, Jr.

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Barden Culbreth





